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From: Crawford, Carol Y. (CDC/OD/OADC) [REDACTED]
 Sent: 2/3/2022 8:21:05 PM
 To: Liz Lagone [REDACTED]@fb.com]
 CC: Gordon, Stephanie (CDC/OD/OADC) [REDACTED]@cdc.gov]; Carrie Adams [REDACTED]@fb.com]
 Subject: RE: Vaccine Misinformation Questions for CDC

PS – the update is very helpful, thank you for including that!

From: Liz Lagone [REDACTED]@fb.com>
 Sent: Thursday, February 3, 2022 4:36 PM
 To: Crawford, Carol Y. (CDC/OD/OADC) [REDACTED]@cdc.gov>
 Cc: Gordon, Stephanie (CDC/OD/OADC) [REDACTED]@cdc.gov>; Carrie Adams [REDACTED]@fb.com>
 Subject: Vaccine Misinformation Questions for CDC

Hi Carol,

I hope you and your team are well and staying healthy. Thank you so much for the information you provided on the claims we asked about last month. Since we last spoke, I wanted to **share updates we made as a result of our work together**. I also wanted to **ask for your assessment on a few things**, including 1) Three additional claims we've become aware of from our regular monitoring; 2) How FDA EUA authorization for children under 5 might impact our policies; and 3) CDC's insights regarding deaths from vaccines. As always, please do let me know if it would be easier to set up time to talk through any of these live! **Otherwise, do you think it would be possible to get input on the below before February 9th?**

Thank you so much in advance for your help, and please let me know if you have any questions!

Best,
 Liz

Updates

On February 2nd, we launched several updates to our COVID-19 Misinformation and Harm policy based on your inputs. These updates include:

- Removing claims that COVID-19 vaccines cause heart attacks, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and "vaccine acquired immunodeficiency syndrome."
- No longer removing claims that the mortality rate of COVID-19 is the same or lower than seasonal influenza.
- Adding a new public FAQ to clarify how we define COVID-19 vaccine efficacy.
- Taking steps to reduce the distribution of content that our systems predict likely violates our COVID-19 and vaccine misinformation policies, but has not yet been reviewed by a human; if at any point this content is confirmed to violate the policy then it will be removed from the platform.

All updates can be found [here](#).

NEW: For CDC Input

For each of the following new claims, can you please tell us if:

1. The claim is false; and
2. If believed, could this claim contribute to vaccine refusals?

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Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns, and otherwise thank you so much for your continued partnership.

Best,
Liz

1. **Claims about COVID-19 vaccines**

• **COVID-19 vaccines cause vulvar aphthous ulcers**

1. Is this false?
2. Could this lead to vaccine refusals?

• **COVID-19 vaccines cause neurodegenerative diseases (e.g. Ataxia, Huntington's disease, Parkinson's disease, Motor neuron disease, Multiple system atrophy, and Progressive supranuclear palsy).**

1. Is this false?
2. Could this lead to vaccine refusals?

• **Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is more likely to kill someone than contracting COVID-19.**

1. Is this false?
2. Could this lead to vaccine refusals?

2. **COVID vaccines for children under five years of age**

We understand the FDA is considering giving emergency use authorization for the COVID-19 vaccine for children under five in the coming weeks. We are considering how our existing policies on COVID-19 vaccines (see below) should apply to claims about children 6 months to 4 years once the vaccine is approved for use. Can you please assess for each claim whether it is false for children in this age range and if believed, likely to contribute to vaccine hesitancy or refusals? *Please let us know if it is easiest to set up time to meet and discuss each one.*

• **Claims about COVID-19 vaccines that contribute to vaccine rejection, including:**

- Claims about the availability or existence of COVID-19 vaccines, specifically:
 - Claims that COVID-19 vaccines do not exist or have not been approved
 - Claims that there are no Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved COVID-19 vaccines or that the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine or Moderna vaccine has not received full FDA approval (does not apply to claims about the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine for children aged 5-15, which is under emergency use authorization)
 - Claims that COVID-19 vaccines are not approved by the FDA if that content also suggests the vaccines are unsafe, ineffective at preventing severe illness or death, experimental, or have not been appropriately tested. Otherwise, we will allow claims that the FDA has not approved a COVID-19 vaccine, other than the Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna vaccine, or make a clear distinction between a full FDA approval and an Emergency Use Authorization with appropriate context such as distinguishing between different types of COVID vaccines.
 - Claims that something other than a COVID-19 vaccine can vaccinate you against COVID-19
 - Claims that COVID-19 vaccines are experimental, if the context of the claim also suggests that vaccinated people are taking part in a medical experiment.

• **Claims about the safety or serious side effects of COVID-19 vaccines, including:**

- Claims that COVID-19 vaccines kill or seriously harm people, which we define as leading to any of the following harmful side effects:
 - Death
 - Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS)
 - Multiple sclerosis
 - COVID-19 or a new COVID-19 strain
 - Autism
 - Miscarriages

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- Infertility or sterilization
- Birth defects
- Shedding
- Altering DNA
- Blood clots (except in relation to specific vaccines for which public health authorities have found possible links or are officially investigating such reports)
- Alzheimer's
- Prion's disease
- Bell's palsy
- Erectile dysfunctions
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Autoimmune diseases
- Antibody-dependent enhancement
- Weakened immune system
- Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
- Heart attacks (does not apply to claims of myocarditis or other heart conditions)
- Multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C)
- Magnetism
- Other side-effects which are impossible or irrational, such as taking the vaccine turns you into a monkey (requires additional information and/or context), or gives you "vaccine acquired immune deficiency syndrome," which is not recognized as a disease or condition.
- Claims that the spike proteins created by the COVID-19 vaccines are dangerous / cytotoxic.
- Claims that building immunity by getting COVID-19 is safer than getting the vaccine
- Claims that COVID-19 vaccines are unsafe generally, or for a certain specific group of people, if that group is identified based on protected characteristics or other identifiers not directly related to their personal health, age, or disabilities (e.g. social status, religion, or political views), or that vaccines are unsafe for menstruating women.
- Claims that being near vaccinated people causes adverse effects on unvaccinated people
- Claims that breast milk from vaccinated people is harmful to babies/children
- **Claims about the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines, including:**
 - Claims that COVID-19 vaccines are not effective in preventing severe illness or death from COVID-19 (see Common Questions below for how we define the term "effective")
 - Claims that people who are vaccinated are more at risk for getting sick with COVID than people who are unvaccinated
- **Claims about how the COVID-19 vaccine was developed or its ingredients, including:**
 - Claims that COVID-19 vaccines contain toxic, prohibited, or harmful ingredients, microchips, animal products, or anything not on the vaccine ingredient list
 - Claims that COVID-19 vaccines are untested
 - Claims that COVID-19 vaccines contain the mark of the beast
 - Claims that people died as a result of the COVID-19 Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine during clinical trials (Note - We allow claims that people died during the COVID-19 Pfizer/BioNTech clinical trials) (requires additional information and/or context).
 - Claims that COVID-19 vaccines contain, or were developed, produced or designed from/with human tissue from aborted fetuses / aborted fetal tissue.
- **Claims involving conspiracy theories about a COVID-19 vaccine or vaccination program, including:**
 - Claims that COVID-19 vaccines are designed to or were developed in order to control a population for non-public health purposes
 - Claims that specific populations are being used or targeted in order to test the true safety or efficacy of a COVID-19 vaccine
 - Claims that vaccines are the reason behind the emergence of COVID variants

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3. COVID-19 vaccines have caused thousands/millions of deaths

Under our current policy, we remove posts that claim that COVID-19 vaccines kill people or lead to death. We remove these posts on the grounds that the claim is false and that it is harmful because if people believed it, it might make them less likely to get vaccinated.

We understand that, in general, COVID-19 vaccines do not cause death. However, we are aware that some deaths have been linked to COVID-19 vaccination, such as is detailed in this correspondence in *The Lancet* (January 1, 2022) reporting death rates from TTS following AstraZeneca vaccination in a number of countries. This give us cause to reconsider our policy on claims about COVID-19 vaccines and death, to allow people to discuss that COVID-19 vaccines have caused and can cause death.

We are seeking your advice on approximately how many deaths can be attributed to COVID-19 vaccines worldwide, if any. This will help us determine the appropriate action to take on content claiming that COVID-19 vaccines have caused certain numbers of deaths.

If it is too difficult to estimate a global number of fatalities, we would appreciate your view on whether the following statements are unequivocally false:

- COVID vaccines have caused tens of deaths around the world;
- COVID vaccines have caused hundreds of deaths around the world;
- COVID vaccines have caused thousands of deaths around the world;
- COVID vaccines have caused tens of thousands of deaths around the world;
- COVID vaccines have caused millions of deaths around the world.

Focusing on the United States, are any of the following statements false?

- COVID vaccines have caused deaths in the US;
- COVID vaccines have caused tens of deaths in the US;
- COVID vaccines have caused hundreds of deaths in the US;
- COVID vaccines have caused thousands of deaths in the US;
- COVID vaccines have caused tens of thousands of deaths in the US.

∞ Meta

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